

Education

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Enhancing Rural and Northern Education through Distance Learning: A Message from the Minister

This school year marks the 80th anniversary of distance education delivery in Manitoba. In 1927/28, the Department of Education began offering correspondence courses to provide Manitobans, particularly isolated rural and northern students, with increased educational opportunities. These early courses were developed to give these students a chance to pursue their education, even while living in some of the most remote communities in the province.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (MECY) not only offers distance learning opportunities in core curriculum areas, it also offers many optional courses that would otherwise be unavailable to students. Rural and northern students continue to benefit from distance learning, as it provides them with a wide range of courses that lets them customize their learning to their individual interests—all without leaving their home communities. Distance learning is a flexible, effective option for students whose various personal circumstances might prevent them from achieving an education in a traditional classroom setting. In addition to improving the range of courses available to rural and northern students, distance education provides all Manitoba students with the opportunity to fulfill or upgrade the credits they require according to their own schedule.

Distance learning courses are written by Manitoba teachers in collaboration with the Department. School divisions provide support to the course-writing teams, and have partnered with MECY to provide the following three distance learning options:

1. The Independent Study Option (ISO) offers print-based courses from Grades 1 to 12. Seventy-eight percent of ISO registrations are from students in rural and northern Manitoba.
2. The Teacher-Mediated Option (TMO) allows Grades 9 to 12 students to learn using ISO courses supplemented by regularly scheduled teleconference sessions with their instructors and students from other schools. All students registered in this program are located in rural Manitoba.
3. The Web-Based Course Option (WBC) provides 42 web-based courses from Grades 9 to 12 that are

available for any school in Manitoba to timetable as part of their course offering. This option began as a partnership, with MECY providing development funding and school divisions writing the course outlines and materials. Since that time, web development has become a regularly scheduled development program in MECY. Today, over 6000 teachers and students have set up accounts and are able to teach or learn over the Internet, using web-based courses either at a distance or within their own school. Many divisions have initiated their own distance learning options using various web technologies, interactive television, and inter-school/divisional conferencing systems.

The Department is currently in the process of engaging educational partners on the topic of distance learning as part of a larger conversation about rural and northern education. With a decline in enrolment in many rural high schools, this means of course acquisition will become even more important. For more information about MECY's commitment to distance learning, contact the Distance Learning Unit in Winkler at <distance.learning@gov.mb.ca> or at 1-800-465-9915, or visit <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl>.

Honourable Peter Bjornson
Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth

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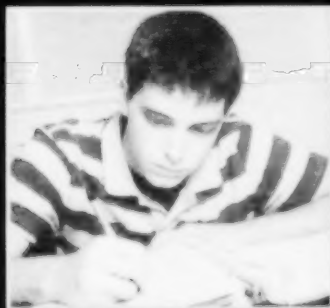
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New and Revised Courses for Independent Learners

New Courses

Three new or significantly revised courses have recently been released through the Independent Study Option (ISO):

- Grade 9 Art**
- Grade 11 English Language Arts: Literary Focus**
- Grade 12 English Language Arts: Language and Technical Communication**



Upcoming Courses

The following courses are currently under development:

- Grade 8 English Language Arts*
- Grade 10 Art*
- Grade 10 Drafting*
- Grade 11 Mathematics: Pre-Calculus**

Courses marked with an asterisk (*) are completely new. Those marked with a double asterisk (**) are significant revisions of existing courses. A number of other courses are under development and will be released at a later date.

For more information on purchasing or registering in a course, contact the Independent Study Option at 1-800-465-9915 or visit their website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso.

For information on course development, email gilles.landry@gov.mb.ca or phone 1-800-282-8069, extension 8770.

For up-to-date information on the release of new ISO courses, subscribe to the biweekly K-12 Website Updates at www3.edu.gov.mb.ca/ss/user.

Students are Growing Creatively

Manitoba's arts and cultural sector is vibrant, exciting, and expanding rapidly. Often celebrated as the heart of a community, the arts energize and beautify our province, attract tourists, and contribute to the economic well-being of Manitobans.

To help build a creative workforce and community, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth introduced the *Growing Creatively* website this fall as part of the Arts Education Renewal plan.

Growing Creatively is an interactive, web-based career guidance tool that helps youth explore the myriad of arts- and culture-related employment opportunities in Manitoba. This youth-friendly resource engages and empowers youth to explore arts-related career paths. It includes practical applications, such as the "Examine Your Skills" section, which utilizes an individualized skills inventory to create a customized report of creative jobs for interested

youth. By asking questions and encouraging curiosity, the "Career Quiz" and video vignettes help youth investigate potential careers and match their personality and strengths to a variety of career paths. In partnership with the Arts and Cultural Industries of Manitoba Inc (ACI), MB4Youth is pleased to be part of this exciting endeavour. Please visit the *Growing Creatively* website at www.growcreatively.ca.

For more information, contact Nancy Buchanan
A/Manager, Youth, Citizenship and Career Development
Telephone: 204-945-0884
or 1-800-282-8069, extension 0884
Email: nancy.buchanan@gov.mb.ca

Coming soon . . .



A new Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth document, *Education of Students Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing*, will provide school staff with teaching strategies and resources, as well as information about working with interpreters, understanding auditory verbal therapy, dealing with amplification devices, and working with the Deaf community.

New Developments in Hebrew: English Bilingual Education

Hebrew language education has a long history in Manitoba, dating back to 1878 when the Coblentz family, Manitoba's first Jewish immigrants, arrived in Winnipeg.

More Jewish families subsequently arrived, many from the United States and a significant number from Russia in the 1880s. Jews also emigrated from other parts of Europe, seeking a new beginning and the opportunity to own their own farms. By the early 1960s, Winnipeg had the third-largest Jewish community in Canada.

Today, Alberta and Manitoba are the only provinces that offer Hebrew bilingual programming in the public school system.

Formal Hebrew language education began with the opening of the first Talmud Torah in 1902. This was followed by the opening of the Peretz and Jewish Folk Schools in 1913, which provided Manitobans with the opportunity for Yiddish language instruction. In 1981, following the 1979 amendments to The Public Schools Act that allowed languages other than French or English to be used for instruction in public schools, Hebrew-English bilingual programming was introduced first in Seven Oaks School Division and shortly thereafter in the Winnipeg School Division. Today, Alberta and Manitoba are the only provinces that offer Hebrew bilingual programming in the public school system.

The term bilingual programming is used to describe a partial immersion program where both English and a second language (in this case, Hebrew) are languages of instruction. In Hebrew bilingual programming, language arts is taught using both languages; other subjects are taught in either English or Hebrew. Cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes are often taught using an integrated approach.

This past winter, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth formally launched the development of a new curriculum framework for K-6 Hebrew language arts in schools offering Hebrew bilingual education. A team with representation

from Brock Corydon and Margaret Park schools was established.

Development of the draft document *Kindergarten to Grade 6 Hebrew Language Arts: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes* was facilitated by Manitoba's

collaborative work with Alberta and Saskatchewan through the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education in the development of *The Common Curriculum Framework for Bilingual Programming in International Languages, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (1999).

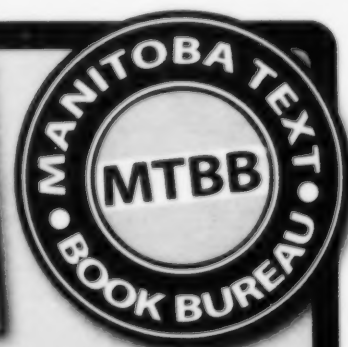
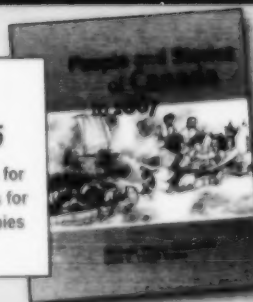
A draft of the new Hebrew curriculum is available for review through the Department's website at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/languages/index.html>. It is expected that the curriculum framework will be completed early in 2008.

For more information, contact

Tony Tavares
Multicultural Education Consultant
Telephone: 204-945-6879
or 1-800-282-8069, extension 6879
Email: tony.tavares@gov.mb.ca

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Supporting Education for Sustainable Development

Educators, students, and school divisions are actively promoting sustainable living within their schools and communities, and Manitoba is moving forward with an in-depth Education for sustainable development (ESD) strategy.

Issues surrounding ESD, particularly in relation to the health of the environment, are of great concern. One way to prepare our students for a hopeful future is to support schools as they address some of these issues. ESD continues to be a priority for Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, as outlined by the initiatives below.

New Resources

- A colourful and engaging poster and accompanying teacher's guide has been developed for Kindergarten to Grade 4 students, with images and information about everyday sustainable living practices. The Grades 5–12 poster and teacher's guide have been well received by educators within Manitoba and other provinces.
- Parent brochures have been distributed, highlighting the sustainable development outcomes and underlying themes in various curricula at each grade. They encourage parents to enter into a conversation about sustainable living with their children.
- A list of learning resources to support teachers in the integration of ESD into Kindergarten to Grade 12 classrooms has been posted on the Department website at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd>.
- Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth has continued its partnership with Manitoba Hydro and will award fifteen \$2000 grants for ESD initiatives by

April 2008. A brief summary of these projects will be posted on the Department website. Units developed by the 2007–08 recipients will also be posted on the website to provide resources for schools wishing to implement similar projects.

GLOBE Initiative

The GLOBE schools initiative is being developed to recognize schools for their work in ESD that addresses both how schools are run and what students learn. This is being done to promote sustainable lifestyle practices as well as responsible action in the school setting. Activities will address the three interrelated components of sustainable development—environment, economy, and human health and wellness—and their contributions to quality of life.

A team of educators is currently working on the structure and specific criteria of the GLOBE schools initiative, and informational materials are being developed to be distributed to educators. It will provide recognition to schools that have just begun addressing ESD issues, as well as those that have progressed to

addressing ESD issues on a school-wide basis with action-oriented projects both within the school and in the community.

Professional Learning

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth has been conducting sessions that provide educators with a rich collection of activities and initiatives they can adapt and use in their individual schools. ESD sessions continue to be available on request throughout the school year to assist educators with their sustainable development initiatives.

To request one of these sessions, contact:

Anne MacDiarmid
Sustainable Development Consultant
Telephone: 204-945-6943
or 1-800-282-8069, extension 6943
Email: anne.macdiarmid@gov.mb.ca



Intensive French and Enhanced French in Manitoba

The 2007/08 school year has gotten off to a great start with the Intensive French (IF) project at Athlone School (Grade 5), as well as the Enhanced French (EF) project at Bruce Middle School (Grade 6) in the James-Assiniboia School Division and at Shamrock and Windsor Schools (Grades 7 and 8) in the Louis Riel School Division.

IF and EF are literacy-based approaches to teaching French as a second language that are incorporated into Basic French. Dr. Claude Germain from the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and Dr. Joan Netten of Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) founded the IF approach, which was first initiated in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1998. IF can be offered in either Grades 5 or 6 and EF in Grades 6–8 and beyond. Presently, IF is taught in every province and in two territories in Canada. In Manitoba, IF was first piloted in the Louis Riel School Division in 2005, and EF was first introduced in 2006 with students who took part in the IF pilot program the previous year.

EF is offered for two to three years or more after the IF year for a minimum of 11 percent of the school cycle during the full school year (from the beginning of September to the end of June). EF students study French for scheduled blocks of time, such as double periods every other day rather than a single IF course. They take part in project-based and experienced-based activities, and there is an increased focus on interaction in the classroom.

Manitoba teachers, administrators, and consultants working in IF and EF participated in training opportunities with other educators from across the country. Principal Walt Lipinski from Bruce Middle School, who participated in the Toronto summer institute that was offered to administrators, stated, "it was a great opportunity to share ideas, concerns, and insights with others looking to develop new and innovative programs.

Everyone left the institute confident that there was a resource network to rely on...."

In addition, the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) has developed *A Framework for the Teaching of Intensive French and Enhanced French in Manitoba, 2007–08*. This framework facilitates the implementation and delivery of IF and EF in school divisions in Manitoba. It outlines the rationale behind IF, the implementation and assessment process, cost-sharing strategies, et cetera. The French Second Language Revitalization Program for official languages, offered by the federal government and administered by BEF, has been fundamental in providing schools with financial support to ensure the successful implementation of this project. The strategies used, the additional time scheduled for Basic French instruction, as well as the intensity of concentrated blocks of time are the three key elements behind much of the project's

success. Classroom activities are project-based, integrating concepts from other subject areas.

Using a second language in context allows for the development of spontaneous communication among students in IF and EF. The second language skills gained by the students are used in a communicative setting. Students' authentic experiences in their second language



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are enhanced by this innovative and alternative approach to teaching French.

To find out more about Intensive French, visit the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers website at <www.caslt.org and www.unb.ca/slec/Publications/if_article.htm> or request a copy of *A Framework for the Teaching of Intensive French and Enhanced French in Manitoba, 2007–08* from the contact below.

For more information, contact

Linda Romeo, Curriculum Consultant
Bureau de l'éducation française
Telephone: 204-945-6916 or 1-800-282-8069, ext. 6916
Email: linda.romeo@gov.mb.ca

MERN Releases Research Ethics Handbook

The Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN) has recently released *Partnership Research in Education: An Ethics Protocol*.

This document examines how ethics are addressed in educational research, outlines the principles of ethical research, and facilitates partnerships among various research groups in Manitoba. It also describes a model for the research review process, and provides electronic links to ethics procedures and forms that are in use in Manitoba universities and several school divisions.

It was prepared by a MERN Ad Hoc Research Ethics Advisory Committee consisting of John Tooth as Chair, Dr. Zana Marie Lutfiyya (University of Manitoba), and

Dr. Laura Sokal (University of Winnipeg). Many Manitoba educational organizations also provided extensive input into the development of this document.

To download a copy of the publication, please visit the MERN website at <www.mern.ca/reports/ethics-protocol.pdf>.

Should you be interested in arranging a workshop on the document or receiving printed copies, please contact:

John Tooth
Chair, MERN Ad Hoc Research Ethics Advisory Committee
Coordinator, Instructional Resources Unit
Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth
1181 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3G 0T3
Phone: 204-945-7833
Email: john.tooth@gov.mb.ca

Update on National and International Assessments

Results from two major assessments in which Manitoba K-12 schools participated are expected to be released this winter. First results from the Programme for International Student Assessment – 2006 (PISA) were released this past December, and the first results from the spring 2007 administration of the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) will be released shortly.

The PISA assessment targeted 15-year-olds in three domains: reading, mathematics, and science. It was administered in the spring of 2006 with science as the major domain (which indicates more thorough assessment and analyses). In addition to permitting pan-Canadian comparative analysis of achievement in these domains and educational context, it will also allow for analysis relative to the 50+ other countries that participated. Further information regarding PISA can be found at <www.cmec.ca/pisa>.

PCAP is a new pan-Canadian assessment program replacing SAIP (School Achievement Indicators Program). In 2007, PCAP sampled 13-year-olds (as of the start of the 2006-2007 school year) in the main domain of reading, with mathematics and science present as minor domains. Details regarding PCAP can be found at <www.cmec.ca/pcap>.

The timing and age targets of PISA and PCAP allow for longitudinal and comparative analyses of student achievement and educational context, which is one of the factors considered in the design of PCAP. With two sets



of achievement results being published in close proximity, there will be a significant amount of information available to educators, stakeholder groups, and the public. There will also be considerable activity in interpreting the results relative to Manitoba. As results become available, there will be communication with schools, school divisions, and stakeholder organizations.

For more information, contact

Ken Clark
Coordinator, National and International Assessments
Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Branch
Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth
kenneth.clark@gov.mb.ca

Learning More about Student Success

The University of Manitoba's Centre for Research, Youth, Science Teaching and Learning (CRYSTAL) is focused on developing a more sophisticated understanding of the factors influencing student success.

This project involves researchers and partners from several universities and institutions from across the Prairie region and north of the 60th parallel, including Brian Lewthwaite, who is its co-director. Brian is involved in several science education research and development projects, including projects in New Zealand, and leads three of them.

One five-year project, which focuses on identifying community aspirations for science education, is based in the Beaufort-Delta Region of the

Northwest Territories and the Qikiqtani region of Nunavut, where all the communities involved are predominantly Aboriginal (i.e., Gwich'in, Inuvialuit, Inuit, Métis). For many years in both regions, the policy for science education has been founded on the principles of place-based and culture-based education. The project seeks to establish a connection between school science and the experiential science beyond the classroom. There are hopes to more than echo the observations of the early 20th-century progressive educator John Dewey, who stated in 1907:

The great waste in schools, from a child's perspective, is his inability to use the experience he gets outside of the school in any complete or free way within the school itself; while on the other hand he is unable to apply what he is learning in daily life. That is the isolation of the school - its isolation from life. When the child gets into the schoolroom, he has to put outside of his mind a large part of the ideas, interests and activities that predominate in his home and neighborhood.

In place-based and culture-based education, the role of schooling is to provide a secure, nurturing environment that reflects the culture of the community and promotes the participation of educational staff, students, families, and the community in making decisions about learning. Teaching is grounded in what students are familiar with—actualities rather than abstractions. Although this might be a community's aspiration, the reality is that a variety of impeding factors often keep us a long way from those aspirations.

Essentially, the northern projects started with an attempt to assist communities in identifying their goals for science education. School

communities were very clear they wanted a science education for their students that honoured their local knowledge, language, values, and customs but also allowed students to develop an understanding of and appreciation for the opportunities provided through a "southern" science orientation. For this reason, the project focuses on "combining the views" of both worlds, and has now moved towards implementing the mechanisms to achieve these goals with the support of the local community.

A second five-year project involves over 40 Manitoba chemistry teachers. In the last decade there has been a gradual shift—at least theoretically—to promote a deeper conceptual understanding of chemistry as well as an awareness of its utilitarian and humanitarian importance. Manitoba's new Grade 11 curriculum has made some early progress in this area, and it is anticipated that the new Grade 12 curriculum will do so as well. As part of this curriculum development, teachers in rural Manitoba and Winnipeg have been involved in professional development opportunities to help them promote student learning and engagement in chemistry. The project is into its second year, and many teachers who have taken part have indicated they have made changes to their own practice as a result of the new curriculum's orientation and the support they are receiving. The project moves this year into identifying whether these changes in practice have a noticeable influence on students and their understanding and appreciation of chemistry.

For more information about CRYSTAL, contact

Brian Lewthwaite
Professor, Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
Telephone: 204-474-9061
Email: lewthwai@ms.umanitoba.ca

For more information about Manitoba's science curriculum, contact

John Murray
Science Consultant
Telephone: 204-945-7899
Email: john.murray@gov.mb.ca

profile

Brian Lewthwaite is an Associate Professor in Science Education with the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. Originally from a rural community in Saskatchewan, he has been a science teacher, consultant, and professor from the Northwest Territories to New Zealand. His Master of Education degree focused on teachers' perceptions of the value of culture-based science education in New Zealand Maori and Canadian Yukon and Northwest Territories First Nation and Inuvialuit schools. He also completed a Ed.D. in Science Learning Environment Research at Curtin University in Perth, Australia.

Over the past 15 years, Brian has worked in over 300 mainstream schools, mainly within New Zealand, fostering school science development and providing diagnostic evaluation to help schools understand the complex factors influencing science program delivery. Since his return to Canada in 2003, he has dedicated himself to helping school communities, especially those in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, move towards place-based and culture-based education that honours their local culture, including their language.



ISO Flexibility Complements School Programming

By David Riley

Independent Study Option Facilitator at Killarney School

Killarney School is a K-12 school located in the southwest corner of the province, with approximately 250 students from Grades 9 through 12. As with many other rural schools, Killarney has suffered from a drop in enrollment in the last few years. This has resulted in fewer teachers, which means there are fewer courses, and these courses are offered less often than students would like.

Killarney Collegiate has addressed this problem by providing students with the opportunity to complete Independent Study Option (ISO) courses within the school.

Distance learning is not just for students who need to achieve their credits outside of a traditional classroom setting. Schools also find ISO to be a useful tool for improving the range of courses they offer, giving students a chance to take specific courses that interest them.

Not only does ISO give smaller schools the opportunity to provide a wider selection of optional credits, it also allows them to make existing programming more widely available. Sometimes two courses are offered at the same time and students are forced to choose one or the other. With ISO, students can take them both and they can complete these courses at times that work for them. ISO also gives students a chance to pick up additional credits. For example, some students may want to take a course from the next grade. With ISO, they do not have

to wait until the next time the course is offered, which can sometimes be as long as a year.

Killarney Collegiate has put a few things in place to help students succeed, and we have seen a wide variety of students achieving ISO credits within the school as a result. We have designated a classroom for students to work on their courses, and teachers are available to answer any of their questions and help them schedule their individual plans to complete their courses. The success rate for students who are provided support for their ISO coursework in the school is significantly better than for those who complete these courses on their own, which indicates this program has been quite effective.

As my school's ISO facilitator I am actively involved in their learning. I order courses and exams,

mail assignments to the ISO tutor/marker, and supervise students as they write exams. I find that students are not only more successful when they are able to study the topics that interest and inspire them, but they are also more successful when they are given support and encouragement in their learning.

By integrating the Independent Study Option into our school programs, we are able to answer students' questions about the course material and to help them manage their time to meet their deadlines. Students also benefit by the more flexible and dynamic learning environment that is created. Overall, we have found that ISO complements our school's programming and enhances students' learning experiences.



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A similar document has been developed by the Bureau de l'éducation française Division for the Français and the French Immersion Programs.

Contact Information:

We invite contributions to Education Manitoba. When forwarding submissions, please include your name and telephone number, and send materials in print and electronic formats to:

Lee-lla Bothe
E260-1970 Ness Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3J 0Y9
Ph: 204-945-7878
Fax: 204-945-3042
Email: lee-lla.bothe@gov.mb.ca

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